

Division 13: Gascoyne Development Commission, \$261 000 —

Mr M.J. Cowper, Chairman.

Mr D.T. Redman, Minister for Regional Development.

Mr G.R. Strickland, Acting Chief Executive Officer.

[Witnesses introduced.]

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Willagee.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: I refer to page 170 of the *Budget Statements*. The first dot point under “Significant Issues Impacting the Agency” refers to the “Gascoyne Regional Investment Blueprint”. The lengthy document produced by the organisation refers to many possible future projects and services for the region, but how many of these possible actions are underway or will be underway with funding in this budget?

Mr D.T. REDMAN: I make the point that the blueprints are not designed to be a shopping list of projects. They are designed to give us some direction to the economic drivers in those regions and some of the areas that might be bottlenecks to unlocking opportunity. In some cases that comes through as health or education or other services and amenities. In some cases, that becomes a problem. I highlight that the blueprint is not a shopping list of projects, and it is not designed to drive just where royalties for regions or any other state government investment happens. It is designed to give direction to the private sector, because it is strongly engaged in the development of the blueprint, to fully understand the drivers and where we can get complementary investment, particularly from the state and federal governments and the private sector.

Acting CEO Geoff Strickland might like to make a comment. The blueprint has only just been signed off, so I am not sure that we can give the member a direction to say what projects fall out of that now. A range of funded initiatives are consistent with the blueprint to date. The member spoke about the education and health one before, and that is in progress. Education has been an issue in Carnarvon. Some of the other ones that have come through are in earlier stages of development and might be at a statewide level, such as agriculture. Can the member be more specific because that is about the best I can —

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Thanks for that explanation. As much as anything, it is about attracting private investment and not only public funding. The minister will note that the report refers to the production of an annual scorecard of the commission’s performance. Has a scorecard been produced; and, if so, by whom? Who will produce the scorecard?

Mr D.T. REDMAN: Where does it refer to a scorecard?

Mr P.C. TINLEY: In the blueprint itself.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: It is a strategy measuring performance over time.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Yes. It is part of the government structure. Fiscal governance is clearly part of it and looking at whether we are getting value for money. Who will produce the scorecard, when will it be finalised and will it be made public?

Mr G.R. Strickland: The scorecard is obviously a work in progress. The initial scorecard is an annual assessment of the performance of the commission by stakeholders. That process is underway as we speak. That is engaging with 130 stakeholders with which the commission has dealings. Longer term, we are looking at aspirational goals in the blueprint over a 25-year period. That process will need to be developed as we go along. Certainly the blueprint is giving a lot of guidance with what sort of projects will get funded, and that gives guidance to the regional grants scheme and others. A couple of immediate areas that we are focusing on are agriculture and food. The member would be aware of the investment in increasing the water and land supply at Carnarvon through the Gascoyne food bowl project. Value adding to that is a priority for the commission. For example, we have commissioned a report on a food processing plant. That is aimed at attracting private investment to support extra production in the area. That is the sort of thing that we are working on in that area. Tourism is the biggest industry for the region. We have established the Gascoyne Tourism Board, which will employ a tourism development officer to give teeth and enable the aspirational goals that are in the blueprint.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Given that Mr Strickland referred to tourism, in which I am particularly interested, I repeat the question on the Coral Bay loop road: where does that sit within the Gascoyne Development Commission’s anticipated funding?

Mr G.R. Strickland: It is a very important project valued at about \$11 million. It is in the pipeline of projects that the minister referred to earlier today and it is quite highly ranked in that process. It is a concept plan that is now being worked on and developed into a business case so that it can advance through the pipeline process and ultimately achieve funding.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Is there a time line?

Mr G.R. Strickland: We would hope to have that well and truly as a business case very early in the next financial year. Depending on other projects and its ranking, funding may or may not be possible within that time frame, but certainly the business case will be ready before Christmas.

The appropriation was recommended.